

MINUTES
Dracut Open Space Committee Meeting
April 14, 2016

IN ATTENDANCE:

Committee members Colleen Barclay, Marianne Blanchet, Bruce Cote, Emile Demers, Bill Greenwood, Karen Merrill, and Dave Sutherland. Also in attendance committee nominee Donna Corbin and Boy Scout Unit Commissioner, Peter Mancuso.

CALL TO ORDER:

Committee Chair, Bruce, opened this month's meeting in the Selectmen's Conference Room at the Dracut Town Hall at 6:35PM.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bruce reported that he heard from both of our /Selectman liaisons, who are unable to be at tonight's meeting.

Bruce also introduced Donna Corbin, who will go before the Selectmen at their next meeting where they will vote on her nomination to our committee.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

We reviewed the minutes of the February Open Space meeting. Dave moved to accept the minutes as Amended. This motion was seconded by Bill and passed unanimously, with Emile abstaining because he was not in attendance at that meeting.

The minutes of the March meeting were also reviewed. Dave made a motion to accept these minutes as written and Bill seconded. The motion passed unanimously with Marianne abstaining because she was not at that meeting.

DISCUSSION

Peter Mancuso, who is a Co-Unit Commissioner for the boy scouts, attended to discuss opportunities for his scouts to work with our committee. Peter explained that new protocols for boy scouts require them to provide regular service hours, and there are still Eagle Scout projects. He stressed that these projects must have a positive effect on their community. He also told us that as Unit Commissioner, he is able to contact troopers of all ages. We learned that May 14th is the Boy Scout Day of Service. On that day he hopes to have several of Dracut's scouts working to maintain and improve our sites. We discussed routine tasks such as clearing and signage, as well as some more involved projects for Eagle Scouts. Many options were discussed and Peter will take these suggestions back to the scouts. We arranged for some committee members to meet with Peter and some scouts to look at some of our sites for potential clearings, clean-ups or projects on April 20th in preparation for May 14th.

OLD BUSINESS

--Karen reported that she talked to Bob and Gay, but they have been sick. They plan to come up with some dates for videotaping in the near future.

--Bill reported that we received a letter stating that, at this time, Mr. Zygoris will not allow us to utilize his property for Proprietors' Way. Bruce will talk to Tony, and Bill will work on other options.

--Bill reported that a neighbor at the Preserve, Rick LaFontaine, who was walking his dog, stopped and helped Bill work on the trail for over an hour. They also met again at another time for further work. Bill has his number and will keep him up to date with Open Space events.

--Bill made three new trail signs for the Preserve. He also spoke to Mike Buxton who provided him with four signs reminding visitors that they are legally responsible to remove their dog's waste.

--Bruce noted that our bird expert works for Verizon and that company is now on strike. If the strike is not settled prior to our birding event, he may not be available to present at our event. We hope to get prior notification if the event must be cancelled.

--Bill stated that we should consider going to the Preserve to do a clean-up prior to our Bird Watching Event on May 7th.

--Dave did research on various ways to mark trails, including signs depicting hikers, arrows or color-coding. We agreed to keep this item on the agenda and make a decision next month.

--Bruce noted that the money promised us by the town manager was to come from the snow removal budget which was barely used this winter. He is not sure if there will still be money in that fund after the last two storms. We discussed some tools that we may need such as a brush cutter for about \$400, a chain saw between \$300 and \$400, and weed whackers. Karen noted that she was at another clean up event and some of the workers had "grabbers" which made work easier and she'd like to get some. Dave and Bill pointed out that our decisions about which tools to buy are likely to depend on our levels of funding and suggested that we hold off on those decisions. Emile noted appreciatively that Dracut Hardware is providing any tools that our committee wants to buy at cost. It is unclear if that offer is for the Pathfinders or for money provided to us from the town. We will look into the alternative of donating town funds to the Pathfinders and making purchase through them. Bruce will look into seeing if that is possible. Bill also pointed out that Pathfinders tools can be stored at our homes, eliminating the problems of storing at a town facility. Potential problems with using town equipment could include having our equipment used, worn out, broken, or not returned at all. We would also only have access to the storage site during their working hours, even for a weekend event.

--Bruce attended the meeting re: the Yapp Farm. They still don't know how it's going to be used. They are required to document restrictions on how the property can be used. Bill asks if that includes our committee. He believes that the town would expect something to happen to that property as soon as possible.

--Bruce agreed to table the topic of working together with the Dracut Land Trust. Lenny Proposki will bring it up.

--Karen scheduled a tree identification walk with Helen Dunlap for May 21st at 10 AM to noon. She will work on the final plans prior to the next meeting.

--Bruce has bags from the DPW. He noted that anyone can pick up bags and do a clean up. Just leave the bags and let Mike Buxton know, and they will pick them up. He shared this with the Peter Mancuso and will post that on our web page and Karen will post it on our Facebook page.

NEW BUSINESS

- Karen shared a google map link for trail representation in on-line maps which is an example of a way to draw the trail name on the trail
- Bruce will keep the election of officers on the agenda for further discussion.
- Karen will bring statistics on activity on our Facebook page.

ADJOURN

- Bruce summarized the meeting and noted action items.
- Karen made a motion to adjourn tonight's meeting at 8:08PM, and it was seconded by Colleen. The motion passed unanimously.

UPCOMING MEETING DATES:

All scheduled meetings will begin at 6:30 in the Dracut Town Hall

Thursday, May 12, 2016

Thursday, June 9, 2016

THE DRACUT OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE


Signature Page

April 14, 2016



Bruce Cote, Chairperson

Colleen Barclay



Marianne Blanchet

Emile Demers



Bill Greenwood



Karen Merrill



Dave Sutherland
